

# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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## Double Talk

With special interest we looked forward to the August issue of *RES News Exchange*. This new bulletin is always informative but this time it would have to give news about the organization that stands behind the bulletin itself, the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. The hundred delegates from the thirty-eight member churches met in the historic Protestant city of Nimes in southern France from July 6 - 25. Our readers know the issues that seem to set the stage for a crisis: the doctrinal decay in the synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands, their dual membership in the RES and WCC (World Council of Churches), and as a new issue their statement about homosexuality. What would the outcome be?

*RES News* is jubilant and we are disappointed. We read under the heading "RES Nimes prayed and stayed together" that in the end all major decisions except one or two were taken almost without dissent. The bulletin attributes what it calls the favourable outcome of the meetings to a number of factors. Conferences during the week prior to Synod on missions, youth work, church-state relations, gospel broadcasting, provided a vision of united testimony and action. Small representative committees came with unanimous reports and these were adopted with relatively slight changes. Possibilities of fruitful cooperation between the World Evangelical Fellowship and the RES seemed to decrease the tension on the issue of WCC membership. Finally the delegates wrestled daily in prayer and at the end there could be a united expression of praise. The moderator expressed "thanks to the Lord for the way His Spirit had led the Synod."

We are a bit amazed about this enthusiastic report in the light of both the decisions and their aftermath in The Netherlands.

Let us first look at the case of Dr. H. Wiersinga and Prof. H. Kuitert. The RES agreed without debate in plenary session that the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (GKN) had exercised discipline in the case of Dr. Herman Wiersinga, whose views on the atonement were found to be without biblical warrant. At the same time the Synod expressed its regrets that the GKN had not restricted Dr. Wiersinga from expounding his "impermissible" views in his official work. The Interim Committee had reported that in their opinion the GKN had "faithfully" exercised discipline in the case, but the Synod substituted for this the word "officially."

The statement of the RES that the GKN had exercised discipline in the case of Dr. Wiersinga raised the astonishment of Dr. J. Plomp of Kampen. In *Gereformeerd Weekblad* of August 1, 1980, he writes that the General Synod of the GKN precisely omitted to exercise discipline with respect to Dr. Wiersinga.

Maar nu concludeerde de vergadering in Nimes, eenstemmig nog wel, dat onze kerken in de zaak dr. Wiersinga wel degelijk tucht hadden uitgeoefend, al had dat krachtiger gekund. Ik moet eerlijk zeggen dat deze uitspraak — die natuurlijk berust op vanwege onze kerken verstrekte informatie — mij hogelijk verbaasd heeft. Want onze generale synode heeft ten aanzien van dr. Wiersinga juist *geen* tucht geoefend. Men heeft haar daartoe wel trachten te bewegen maar ze heeft zich daar angstvallig (zou ik bijna zeggen) voor gewacht. . . .

Het lijkt mij vreemd naar *binnen* te zeggen: er is geen tucht geoefend, en naar *buiten*: wij hebben dat wel gedaan. Ik mag toch niet aannemen dat men ieder maar heeft laten horen wat hij graag *wilde* horen, maar daar lijkt het wel op.

Dr. Plomp therefore, remarks that some people had tried to sway the Synod of GKN into the direction of discipline, but this Synod had painstakingly avoided it. It seems strange to him that there is different talk to insiders and outsiders of the GKN and it appears that the informants have said that which the listeners desired to hear one way or another.

I may refer to my article *RES and RCN (syn.)* in our issue of February 23, 1980, in which I stated that the RES Interim Committee and our OPC brothers had the wool pulled over their eyes. Sadly enough we have now to add that the whole Synod of Nimes 1980 in its unanimous conclusion showed to be the following victim. The only way in which I can explain the misunderstanding of the situation is the double talk about judicial discipline and justiciary discipline. Judicial discipline are only words but no action. Over against the Interim Committee of the RES representatives of the GKN (RCN) may have spoken of discipline in the sense of (*judicial*) discipline, while in their own circles General Synod had stated that it should not interfere with (*justiciary*) discipline which first of all is the responsibility of the local church.

The Interim Committee and the RES Nimes should have studied the new form of subscription in the GKN (see our issue of March 8, 1980). They are of paramount significance for the doctrinal development or decay of the synodical churches in The Netherlands.

Apart from this, the ambiguity in the description of the Wiersinga case — and we may add a similar ambiguity in the case of homosexuality, namely with the word "beleving", i.e., experience or practice — is an abomination in what is supposed to be the house of the Lord. The God of truth hates ambiguity and the Spirit of truth does not lead into grey areas but into clear daylight.

J. FABER

# press review

## "YOUR KINGDOM COME" IN MELBOURNE

In the month of May of this year the "World Mission and Evangelism Conference" of the World Council of Churches was held in Melbourne, Australia. The theme of the Conference was "Your Kingdom come." In *Calvinist Contact* of July 25 and August 1, 15, and 22, a series of articles appeared, written by Dr. Arent de Graaf, minister of the Reformed Churches in Australia. He is a member of the interim committee of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod and attended the Conference in Melbourne as an observer. From his report and comments I take over parts in this Press Review. From the first article:

"Your Kingdom Come" was the theme, and that — said the Conference time and again — is good news . . . but only *good* news for *the poor*. For the rich — the Conference insisted — the news is bad . . . or ought to be.

It is the poor of this earth that God identified at Calvary and identifies now. If the church is unwilling to bear the cross and suffer with Christ as He suffers today in the slums of Calcutta and the oppressed of South Africa's blacks or Latin America's exploited workers, she is no church but just the puppet of the rich Western Protestant powers, who — mainly through those evil trans-national corporations — make the name of Jesus a mockery . . .

The kingdom of God, for which we pray when we say "Your kingdom come" was mostly looked at through the spectacles of the "liberation theology."

Dr. Ernst Käsemann, the well-known New Testament scholar of Tübingen University, West Germany, also like the Indian Orthodox leader Mar Ostathios, were strong in their call for "a classless society . . ." Jesus' sermon in the Nazareth Synagogue with that quotation from Isaiah 61: ". . . The Spirit of the LORD is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach Good News to the poor, . . . to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour . . ." was often referred to at the Conference as "the Nazareth Manifest" and was read almost exclusively in the light of social revolution. What took place at Calvary was basically a "class struggle and the strong impression was given that those who are poor in this world (and how many

are there of them) have no sins to confess, no [need of, J.G.] blood to cleanse them before a holy God.

At the end of his first article Dr. de Graaf says that we cannot ignore these voices with their "unrelenting criticism on the Christians of the West." He remarks that there was the great danger of syncretism at the Conference. But he also writes the following:

If the struggle at Calvary was mainly a class struggle, then — to quote Paul — "You are still in your sins and our preaching has been in vain . . ."

But I am also glad that our churches have not done what other RES churches did: join the World Council of Churches. More than ever after this Conference, I believe that the voice of the WCC is not that with which a Reformed church is to speak in the world today.

I shall come with my own remarks later.

In the second article Dr. de Graaf first tells that one day at the Conference was fully devoted to the situation in Australia: in one word, that situation was terrible. Many, many of the Aborigines were murdered. This is a horrible truth. And many are still oppressed and poor. Also in Australia the churches were just the servants of the political establishment, it was said. And further a paragraph is devoted to the matter of Missions, and what was said at the Conference about all the Mission work that has been done and still is being done, Mission work that preaches Jesus as the Christ, the Saviour from sin and guilt through His sacrifice at the cross. We read:

. . . But the missionary proclamation of Christ that gave rise to these Third World churches was criticized so harshly, if not "rubbished" outright! It was stated in papers and from the floor again and again that these "Missions" rode into these lands on the back of colonial, enslaving powers, not just to bring the Message of Christ's salvation, but also to bring oppression, and exploitation and bad Western patterns of life . . . More severe even was the criticism that those enslaving oppressing powers rode in on the back of Missions. The church opened the way for the slavedrivers . . .

There was the angry voice of the Kampen

graduate, Dr. Allan Boesak, coloured South African, now student pastor in Cape Town. "The white church conspires together with the white Caesar to oppress and to kill. Good News for the oppressed can only be good if it is bad news for the oppressors! And the day of reckoning is coming fast!" (i.e. the day of civil war). And this minister serves the Dutch Reformed Mission Church! . . . [It was] pointed at American Protestants as the "villains of the piece," and their churches as servants of oppression and enslavement . . .

Dr. de Graaf then writes:

What struck me in the discussions was that the church in the West, the "free world," is called to protest, to resist the capitalist lifestyle, the trans-national corporations, consumerism, and that in terms which have a clear Marxist slant.

But when Christians in Marxist-led countries (or, as it was officially termed: countries with centrally planned economies)



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were addressed, more often than not the motto was: "keep out of politics!"

And in the third article we read on this point:

About the poor in the communist world the statement says very little. Two men . . . tried to redress this by making the Conference protest also against what the Russians are doing in Afghanistan. After all, if you are speaking in political terms, you may as well do so even-handedly. But this evoked such an angry and threatening reaction from the Russians (two Orthodox and a Baptist) who even rattled with a possible withdrawal from the WCC, that the Conference hastily retreated! Not a word about this in any of the papers!

What follows does not make it less bad. Against the one (the West, America) you can say everything, because it does not have a big mouth and does not threaten. Against the other (Russia) you do not say anything, because he has such a big mouth and does threaten. I cannot see that this is a truly Christian attitude, which comes up for the poor and cries out against the oppressor. But here is the reasoning:

Not that everybody cared. This was clear enough in the private discussions over coffee. There was much concern about the way people were robbed of their spiritual freedom in such totalitarian states. It was just the fear that, by driving the Russians out, life for the minorities in their country would be made more miserable still. I think that this is true, though it is a galling thing to see that they who shout loudest seem to have their way again.

This is too weak, in my opinion. The practice is that a big mouth only has some respect for a still bigger mouth, and for a truly strong protest. Solzhenitsyn and other dissidents would not be in the "free world" except for the loud protests in the West against the injustice done to them.

Further, in fact the whole third article focusses on the matter of the poor, and that the "good news" is only for them. The author points to the fact that in Matthew 5:3 we read about the "poor in spirit" for whom the kingdom of God is promised. And that is not exactly the same as *all* the economically poor people in this world. The author points to the parable of the rich Pharisee over against the poor Publican who comes to God as a sinner with a contrite heart. He writes that that is the true contrast. Dr. de Graaf also writes:

The great danger of this theology that talks of God's bias towards the poor (the economically poor, that is) . . . is that both those poor themselves, as well as those

who side with them on earth politically, say by voting socialist, or by giving money to the Program to Combat Racism, are now made to believe that God likes them simply for that reason. They need no (or: less) forgiveness, no (or: less) atonement for their sin. Do they still have sin, too?

Then the Gospel has become a law again! Albeit a leftist law!

I believe that this criticism is correct — this danger is real. But just as real is the danger that we, in reaction, overlook the Biblical truth which in these conference statements comes tugging at our sluggish consciences . . . .

It is this evangelical, free-grace basis for the theology of the poor which did not come through nearly enough at this Conference. And that is, as I see it, a dangerous omission for two reasons:

First, it hardens the poor who, in their revolutionary struggle for bread, lose sight of being sinners before God as all are;

Second, it hardens the well-to-do Christian who, seeing this one-sidedness (maybe even: reading this stuff about this Conference) shrugs it all off, says it's no use giving to that kind of people . . . .

After all: the Conference is right where it speaks of a total, cosmic all-of-life redemption and points at the way God the Father of Jesus Christ gave His Old Testament people the kind of laws that, if well applied, made beggars in the Promised Land nonexistent: people were looked after."

I ask myself this question: Is also Dr. de Graaf not influenced too much by the many voices that are against and so severely criticize the Western countries? Sure, I agree; there is much injustice done. And there is not enough help given by the rich; it is often politics. Nevertheless, I think that it is all unbalanced and biased yet. Is there not a constant flow of financial and material aid going from the free West, especially North America, both from the side of the government and from Christian organizations, to the poor of the so-called "Third World?" There is not enough, one can say. But it is there.

And what does the Communist World do? About the only help they give is: stirring up the nations of the Third World; bringing revolution there; planting, if possible, communist regimes which kill and murder and so very much increase poverty and other misery. Think of Cambodia and Vietnam, for example. And who takes care of the many poor victims of Communism? From where must help come? And from where does it come? Maybe not enough. But it comes from the Free Western World, which is criticized so much; from many Christian organizations.

And that there is so much misery in the Third World countries, e.g. in India and in Africa, is caused not only by the disasters that strike, or by those exploiting multi-national corporations — let alone by the Western churches — but so very, very much, yes even in the first place, by un-biblical, apostate religions and philosophies. So we see India ruled by a very strong class system where the higher classes of people have only disdain for the others, and where the Hindu and Buddhist religions forbid the killing of animals, rats included, because a rat could be the re-incarnation of one of your dead relatives. And a million rats eat a lot of food.

In the last article attention is paid especially to what a Japanese professor pointed out: "The dominant reality of Asian suffering is that people are wasted."

The picture is people ending up in a waste bin, living people scrapped as worthless . . . . The Conference prayed: "Your Kingdom Come" and it thought, in doing so, of that Realm, that King, that would make an end to that scrapping, that wastage . . . .

Time and again the Conference stressed that the Kingdom of God comes where Christians, like their King, let go of their rights, their privileges, their riches.

Yes, wastage of people is a terrible thing, like in Cambodia and in the Russian prisons and slave camps, for instance. Why not say that, too, then, clearly and loudly in a firm statement? Then the Conference would have a right to blame also the West. And what about governments in India and elsewhere? They are not less guilty than in the West, are they?

Important is what follows:

But rightly the South African Missions professor, Dr. David Bosch, stressed that all this gets rather airy-fairy without personal conversion of the sinner to God! Exactly when he (i.e. Christ) talks about entering the Kingdom he stresses to Nicodemus (John 3) the need of "being born again of water and of Spirit." It is a pity that this Conference whittled this good Biblical statement away till almost nothing was left of it . . . .

When the Canadian Evangelical professor Clark Pinnock asked attention for the "Billions who never heard the Good News" (after all, this was supposed to be a Missions and Evangelism Conference!) he was hotly attacked over it, especially by the Indian Orthodox metropolite Mar Ostathios who then repeated what he also had said in his plenary address, that the Kingdom of God was also active in other religions: Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism.

Not only Mar Ostathios, but many others

at this Conference have stated openly and often with no noticeable opposition, that in all places where human suffering is alleviated no matter what faith or religion does that, God's Kingdom is coming . . . . Often it sounded very sweet: "Who can limit the power of the cosmic Christ?"

And Dr. de Graaf adds:

I found this one of the most frightening aspects of this whole Conference: this Missions and Evangelism Conference, of all things. It was clearly stated in one of the reports that dialogue with other religions is no real dialogue if the aim is to win the others over to the Christian faith!

Dr. de Graaf points out that this is clearly in conflict with the Gospel: there is no other Name by which we must and can be saved.

And thus we have to do here with false prophecy. Let me give another quotation from the apostle Paul. You can find it in Galatians 1:8, 9, "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, If any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed." That is what God's Word says.

Further, I may add something to what Dr. de Graaf already said with regard to the "poor" for whom the Kingdom of God is. The quotation of Isaiah 61 in Luke 4 that Christ has been anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, and Christ's word in Matthew 5: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," are to be seen in the light of the Old Testament promises to the poor (very often economically poor, indeed) *who go with their poverty to the LORD* and give their misery into His hands and expect help and salvation from Him alone. It is not the poor who take things into their own hands and cause a revolution. I would like to quote here from a commentary on the epistle of James. James writes to poor Christians. Now in his days there was a certain special "piety of the poor" or maybe we can say "theology of the poor" among the Jews. It was very strong, for instance, among the Qumran sect. The poor will be delivered and the rich will be punished. This is found in the Bible, also in the epistle of James. But,

the difference between the teachings of the Letter of James and those of Qumran, especially of the "War-scroll," is that James expects all the help for the oppressed poor from the LORD only (5:2ff; 5:7ff) and nothing from an eschatological

holy war of the poor against the rich ungodly and sons of Belial. And what James says agrees with the teachings in the Old Testament "Psalms of the Poor." Therefore, the "piety of the poor" (*Armenfrommigkeit*) of our letter (James) is also not proletarian, but entirely religious . . . . The "Christian character" in this "piety of the poor" of this letter consists before everything else in the eschatological expectation: help comes from the returning Lord (5:7ff); for Him the poor must wait with patience and confidence.\*

So the "theology of the poor" as preached in Melbourne, and all over, is biblically, totally unwarranted. Like some Jews did in the apostolic time, it is done today: Biblical terms and words are used, but they are given un-biblical contents. In Melbourne the message of the Scriptures was not heard, but that of modern humanism, that is Marxism, although covered with the Name of Christ Jesus.

It is remarkable, indeed, that Marx, the father of Marxism and Communism and Socialism, who was a Jew himself, came with such an old Jewish idea of a final struggle, an eschatological holy war of the poor against the rich oppressors, in which they would take over the power and establish a new paradise.

But this connection is not only remarkable, it is also frightening. Many of the new leaders in Africa and Asia, part of the Third World, have been educated either at Western universities, or at Mission schools. There they got their Marxist ideologies. So the East is already Marxist. Many nations in the Third World are also more or less Marxist. And in the West the professors at many a university and college, and, consequently, many teachers at the schools teach in the Marxist line. And, what is worse, if not worst of all: many church leaders, the WCC, modern theology, proclaim the same Marxism, although in a so-called "Christian" garment. And in this way the modern false prophecy of this Marxism (with its earthly paradise through a human holy war or revolution) also prepares the people in the West for turning Marxist. The result seems to be that the whole world will become one: one Marxist world, ready to receive the great anti-redeemer for this world, the anti-christ. People and organizations who claim to be Christian prepare the way for the anti-christ! That is not only frightening, it is also sad. And it is also an energy of error, sent by God, that people might believe the lie, because they refuse to love the truth (I Thessalonians 2).

There is one last remark I would like to make. It is also remarkable that in Melbourne the churches of the West are scolded so much about having stood behind all the injustice of Western political powers and having promoted them, while it does not seem to be noticed that Melbourne and affiliates adhere so very much to and promote the modern political power of Marxism, and thus of Russia's communism. If ever, then for sure now, modern theology and modern churches and their leaders and organizations are under the spell of an un-Christian ideology and political power.

J. GEERTSEMA

\* Franz Muszner, "Der Jakobusbrief" in *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, II, 1967, (Herder, Freiburg-Basel-Wien).

## Church News

Called:

by the Church at Barrhead, Alberta:

REV. M. VANDERWEL

of Abbotsford, B.C.

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### Theological College

1. Mr. W. Slomp, Hamilton passed the admission exam to the College.
2. The brothers C. Bosch, Burlington; W. DenHollander, Hamilton; M. vanLuik, Beamsville; J. Moesker, Fergus; and W. Slomp, Hamilton; were admitted as students to the College.
3. The Convocation and Annual College Evening will, D.V., be held Friday, November 7, in Wellington Square United Church, Caroline St., Burlington, Ontario.

L. SELLES,  
Registrar and Secretary

### FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on Saturday, September 13, 1980.

### OUR COVER

*Aerial Photo of Winnipeg. (Photo Courtesy Manitoba Government.)*

# news medley

Yes, thank you, business is picking up, although it goes very slowly. There were a few more bulletins this time, and the particulars which I could mention from those bulletins have increased accordingly. Mind you, I *could* mention much more than I do pay attention to, but not everything is equally edifying, is it? Besides, there are some matters which I could mention every time anew, for they occur with regularity. However, then our readers might get fed up with our column because it deals with the same matters time and again, and that is not very interesting. Yet I wished that the few good remarks which I make once in a while (having been instructed by others) found a more willing ear and heart than they sometimes do. Even though it might become monotonous, I repeat that it is wrong to write "the family N.N." and that only "the N.N. family" is proper English. It is gratifying to see that in many bulletins the proper expression is being used. Could the few who still hold out, also change to the correct way? Personally I do not mind so much seeing a Dutchism in the bulletins; but they are read by outsiders, too, and I should like to get rid of the image of being a "Dutch Church."

The second point (also an "old" remark) is that we should not speak of someone "doing" profession of faith, since the proper expression is "to *make* profession of faith."

I do bear in mind the remark which was made by our brother who pointed to a mistake of mine that we should try not to become "pedant" when trying to purify the language used; but knowing how stubborn we oftentimes are in following a certain pattern and using specific expressions, I do take the liberty of pointing the above out once more.

That I came to speak of "making profession of faith" is because in various bulletins the Catechism classes are mentioned and also the "pre-confession class" belongs to those classes. It is indeed a big question whether we should have separate classes for those who in that year or the next spring wish to profess their faith before God and His holy Church.

It is mainly for practical reasons that we have such classes. They are no more than a refresher course, so to speak. Besides, it is my experience that those who wish to make profession of faith show much more interest in what is being discussed and appear much more willing to learn than many students attending the other classes. That "pre-confession" hour has always been my most pleasant class and it still is, even after thirty-seven years.

Personally I do not have any objections to such a special class as long as it remains clear that it is not indispensable for those who wish to profess their faith. That's why I always stress that anyone is permitted to come to any meeting of the consistory with the request to be admitted to the public profession of faith and this to the holy supper. But if there are students who wish to go over everything again within the months set aside for a "pre-confession hour" I, for one, do not have any objection to that.

"Post-confession hours" are also in the making in several Churches. Those are hours for the ones who al-

ready have been admitted to the holy supper and who wish to learn more about the Scriptures or about the Confession or the History of the Church.

A few years ago we had such an hour here in Fergus, during which we crawled through the Canons of Dort and were enabled to admire the beauty of this confessional form. This winter we are going to deal with the Church History from 1795 to present, and pay special attention to The Netherlands, United States, and Canada: that is in order that we may see the line from the old Reformed Churches in The Netherlands to us today.

In August I conducted a course for those of our teachers who had expressed the wish to study that period more thoroughly, and I thought that our own congregation should also reap the benefits of that work. Besides, we can pay more attention to the details and tell a few things around the dates and events which form the bone-structure of that period. When you conduct a course of five days you are bound to a limited number of hours and have to restrict yourself. For us in our own congregation it does not matter whether we spend twenty or forty evenings on that period: if we can't finish this winter, we happily continue next winter, the Lord willing.

I am happy that more of my colleagues give themselves to conducting such evenings for interested Church members. I still consider it the primary task of a minister to teach and am grateful when I see that that is being done.

Another activity which is going to be resumed is the activity of our societies. In some instances preparatory meetings were held where the course was outlined and plans were made. The Rev. M. VanBeveren tells us about such a meeting which he attended.

Last week I could attend a meeting called together by young people who wish to improve on the work of their societies. It was one of the warmest August evenings, I think, and that may explain why the attendance was below the expectations. Nevertheless, it was a good initiative to come together to try to find the best ways to make the societies more effective. I resist the temptation to give a report, but I want to underline some of the recommendations:

Be organized: If there is a constitution, dust it off, renew it, and live by it. Better some strict rules than anarchy.

Plan ahead: Draw up a good curriculum for at least three months with the names of the essayists. Nothing is more senseless than discussing a topic that has not been studied.

Appoint good leaders: Whether a meeting is successful depends for the greater part on the president. Young people should not feel too old for the societies when they are just over 20 or get married.

Remember: We can gain from our societies only if we are willing to give.

It was good, I thought, to pass the above on to our readers. Perhaps there are more societies that can benefit from the above than those in Burlington East only. If the younger ones, those who start attending society meetings, are to learn how to do things well, then the older ones are to give the good example, and then the older ones should not stay away from the meetings because they feel too old, or because so many younger ones join nowadays. If the man forgets that he was a boy once, he is bound for failure.

The Church at Guelph is to receive its own minister of the Gospel and will have received him by the time you read

these lines. The Consistory purchased a house to serve as parsonage, and you will read the address of the R. Aasman family in the column of official news from the Churches, either in this issue or in the next one.

In Brampton the Consistory paid attention to the heating of the Church building, and came to the conclusion that it would be best to install a "liquid propane furnace" which can be changed and be adapted to the use of natural gas.

In the London bulletin the Rev. J. DeJong mentions the work of the committee that worked on the rhyming of the Psalms and on the Hymns. He then states that:

The work of the Committee is reaching father and farther, and becoming more known. Recently some of the rhymings were used at the meetings of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod at Nimes, France.

That is indeed something which gives us much joy. And it is the more proof that the Synod of Homewood 1954 acted wisely when appointing a committee for the preparation of an Anglo-Genevan Psalter.

I could tell you in what manner this work has become known to that Reformed Ecumenical Synod. The Committee has had some contact with a committee in the Reformed Churches of Australia (not our sister-Churches) which are interested in using at least some of our rhymings. Delegates from those Churches must have taken some samples along to France.

It is our sincere wish that our work may indeed become more widely known and used, for when in her singing the Church stays closely-bound to the Word of the Lord, errors will have far less chance of creeping in. It was more than once by means of unscriptural songs that wrong thoughts found acceptance.

And what about the songs our young people hear on the radio? Are they not instrumental in introducing unbelieving and anti-godly ideas?

The Canadian Reformed Churches undertook a work of great cultural importance when they decided to do it on their own in the matter of singing the praises of the covenant God in the worship services.

One last item from Ontario,

In Ottawa, the Consistory decided:

to appoint a committee to consider the feasibility of calling a minister. This committee will study the calling of a minister with respect to:

1. The function of a minister in Ottawa;
2. The financial requirements of supporting a minister;
3. The availability of a suitable minister for our special requirements and needs.

We go to Carman, Manitoba.

The Consistory decided that the elders will personally arrange home visits in their own ward this coming season. It will not be announced from the pulpit anymore.

We find an explanation of that decision in the same bulletin, and from that explanation we quote the following.

The consistory thinks that this is a more orderly way of doing the home visits. Firstly to make the announcements as short as possible in the worship service. It has also happened in the past, when a home visit was announced it had to be cancelled for lawful reasons, and the same visit had to be announced a couple of weeks later again. To prevent this, the consistory decided to try this new way.

It is, I am convinced, the proper way not to announce family visits from the pulpit. I think that I said it before, but I repeat it

then: whatever is announced from the pulpit must be a matter which concerns the Congregation as such, the Congregation-as-a-whole. Such is the case, e.g., with the ordination of office-bearers or the public profession of faith. It cannot be considered a matter of the congregation-as-such where and when the elders are going to bring a family visit. Then such visits should be arranged privately and not via the pulpit. Much less, of course, should an announcement be made when the visit has already been arranged.

Quite a while ago I conducted a service somewhere in which I also had to announce a few family visits. I protested but, since it was a decision of the Consistory to announce them, I did it. My protest became even stronger when I learned that the visits had already been arranged and that the only purpose of the public announcement was to more or less inform the congregation of them.

The story is not yet at an end. In the afternoon I had to repeat the announcement. For what reason? Because one of the parties was not in Church that morning. Apparently that party had to hear from the pulpit what it already had known for some days . . . .

No, then I think that Carman's decision is a wise one. I wonder in how many Churches family visits are still announced. There won't be very many.

Let's continue our trip.

From the Neerlandia bulletin we learn the following.

Word has been received that the visa for the Rev. Boersma was refused, but he may again appeal this and may stay in Brazil as long as that appeal goes.

Let us all join in the prayers for the continuation of the work of the Lord in that part of South America. It is not *our* cause which we endeavour to promote.

Our trip ends in Smithers. We mentioned the Youth Bible Camp before. This summer they again conducted such a camp for the native youth. Whoever walks through Smithers cannot fail to notice the many people of Indian descent. It is practically impossible for us to gain access to the various regions where Indians and Eskimos live in order to establish a mission post among them. But Smithers does what can be done: contact them right in town and in this manner gain access to the reservations by gaining access to the hearts of the people.

Rev. Van Spronsen reports:

Of the 30 children that registered, 29 did indeed come, which number did keep all of us leaders busy. The study-sessions, dealing with the ten commandments, generally went well, while they also learned some songs. Although there were some minor incidents which only underscored their great needs, the atmosphere was very good and we could certainly note progress over last year. The regular get-together had tied this group more together. Several of the parents also dropped in again, as well as some other Indian visitors. They showed much appreciation for the work we are doing and contacts could be renewed and strengthened.

Could we end on a happier note?

vO

## Matthew 21:22

"And whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith."



*News items are published with a view to their importance for the Reformed Churches. Selection of an item does not necessarily imply agreement with its contents.*

## INTERNATIONAL

Seminary students in Hungary are being punished for participating in religious group activities and carrying out pastoral work among university students. One seminarian at the Theological Seminary in Budapest was refused ordination by Istvan Bagi, auxiliary bishop and rector of the seminary. Fifteen other seminarians appealed on his behalf to the Hungarian Episcopal Conference. As the case had caused a sensation among believers, the bishop decided to avoid further controversy by allowing the ordination after all. But he penalized the 15 other seminarians by sending them back to their dioceses and banning them from further study at the seminary. (CT)

The World Muslim League is pushing the Koran and its recitation among Muslims living outside the traditional Muslim sphere. The league, with headquarters in Mecca, has made 3.4 million copies of the Koran available to this diaspora in the last few months. A spokesman said that the Saudi Arabian government has decided to establish a modern Koran printing press in Medina and announced production of a further 5 million copies. Also, for the first time, the league has sent 31 Koran reciters to the non-Islamic world — people specially trained to “recite” passages from the Koran in the approved modified chanting style. An additional 100 reciters are being trained. (CT)

United Methodism has its first woman bishop: Marjorie S. Matthews, 64, of Traverse City, Michigan. Her

election in June by the UMC's North Central Jurisdictional Conference required a record 29 ballots, then a suspension of the rules before the thirtieth, when she was elected by acclamation. Significantly, Matthews, who for the last five years had been her annual conference district superintendent, is believed to be the first elected woman bishop of any major U.S. denomination, and the first to attain this level of authority over a large ecclesiastical area within a U.S. Protestant body. She described her election to reporters as “a gigantic step for womankind and a leap in the church's understanding of theology.” UMC women's groups had lobbied for some time for a female bishop. (CT)

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship invited controversial Roman Catholic theologian Hans Kung to join

their ranks, but Kung declined. In his reply, Kung said he will continue studies toward a Unitarian point of view, “going back to the original intention of the New Testament.” But, he said, they would understand how such a membership “would be misunderstood.” (CT)

The political action committee of the National Abortion Rights League (NARAL) has given \$5,000 to the general election campaign of independent presidential candidate John Anderson. Rep. Anderson has always objected to government regulation of abortion and has “carried our banner from the beginning,” said Karen Mulhauser, NARAL executive director. She said that Rep. Anderson's strong pro-choice views have put him on the “hit list” of a conservative anti-abortion lobby. (TB)

vO

## PRESS RELEASE

*of the Board Meeting of the Canadian Reformed High School Association in Ontario, held on August 18, 1980.*

We sang Psalm 42:1 and 5. The chairman, Br. J. Schutten, read from I Cor. 5 and led in prayer. After the welcome the agenda was adopted. There was no mail.

Because Br. A.J. Hordyk's term as a delegate of Burlington East has expired, he requested to be relieved of the function of Secretary of the Board. Since elections for positions on the Executive Committee are slated for the fall, Br. L. Rozema was appointed Temporary secretary.

*Reports:* The Education Committee recommended that the new system of examinations, as was introduced last term, be continued and be made permanent. Adopted. This committee also reported that of the 36 students who failed last term, 24 have now been passed as a result of summer study and re-examinations. Three students still have to write the re-examinations.

The Board decided to write a letter of appreciation to the Brs. Faber and VanZandwyk for having given so freely of their time and talents to serve the Board through its Education Committee.

The Finance Committee Report given by the treasurer, H.F. Stoffels, gave a complete oversight of the

operating expenses and income for the year ending June 30, 1980. It appears that there is an operating deficit of \$36,642.44. A discussion followed but no solution was found. The Board approved a suggestion by the Committee that a letter of enquiry be sent to members who have students in the school in order to gather data which regards to a proposed new fee structure. A response from all those members is necessary in order to get a clear picture.

October 3, 1980, was adopted as a provincial date for our Fall Membership Meeting. Everyone was requested to keep that date free in order to attend.

The Transportation Committee informed the meeting that Brampton was switching companies for busing and that a new contract has to be signed. This was approved.

The Maintenance Committee informed the Board that the school building is ready to welcome the students in the fall.

*Question Period:* A few questions for information were answered.

The Press Release was read and adopted.

Br. H. Harsevoort led in thanksgiving prayer.

For the Board,  
L. ROZEMA



# our little magazine



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Christine Riemersma*. We are happy to have you join us, and we hope you'll be happy joining us in all our Busy Beaver activities. Will you write and tell us something about yourself, Christine? Bye for now.

Hello, *David Nienhuis*. It was nice to hear from you again. I'm glad you had such a nice summer holiday. How does it feel to be back in school, David?

Congratulations on your new niece, *Darlene Lodder*. Are you ever a lucky girl! Do you help look after her sometimes? I'm glad you had such a nice holiday, Darlene. Bye for now. Write again soon.

### QUIZ TIME

Let's start with a Bible quiz. See how many of these you know. The name of each starts with a "J".

#### All J's

1. He "sold pottage" and stole his brother's birthright. \_\_\_\_\_
2. The walls of this city fell down after the besieging Israelites had "compassed it about seven days." \_\_\_\_\_
3. The unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica assaulted his house because he received Paul and Silas. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The biggest river in Palestine. \_\_\_\_\_
5. The writer of a book of the Old Testament whose prophecy was quoted by Peter in his speech on the day of Pentecost. \_\_\_\_\_
6. He came from Bethlehem and his most famous son was first a shepherd, then a king. \_\_\_\_\_
7. His rash oath led to the sacrifice of his only daughter after his victory over the Ammonites. \_\_\_\_\_
8. It was in this city that Peter saw a vision on the housetop to prepare him for the visit of the messengers from Cornelius. \_\_\_\_\_
9. He was a furious driver who avenged the death of Naboth by overthrowing Ahab's sons. \_\_\_\_\_
10. He commanded the sun and moon to stand still so that the Israelites could complete the pursuit and destruction of the Amorites. \_\_\_\_\_

(Use your Bible or get someone to help you, if you need to, Busy Beavers.)

Busy Beaver *Linda De Boer* found some jokes for you.

1. Mr. handy was putting up a knotty pine wall in his living room. His young son came along and said, "What are those holes for?" "They're knot holes," replied his father. "Well then," said the son, "if they're not holes, what are they?"
2. Teacher: "Name one thing we didn't have fifty years ago."  
Tommy: "Me."

Hello Busy Beavers,

A little while ago I made a promise to one of you. I promised one busy Beaver a new contest! And now I have to keep that promise, right? A promise is a promise. Are you interested in this new contest, too? I think many of you will be! And why? Because our new contest is a **CARTOON CONTEST!** We want to see who can draw the funniest person OR the funniest animal. Remember it *MUST* be your *OWN* drawing. We want to see what you can do! I know many of you Busy Beavers are good at drawing. Some of you even make a hobby of it! Let's see what you Busy Beavers can do. Send in as many entries as you like. Put your name and age on each one and send to:

*Aunt Betty*  
Box 54,  
Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7

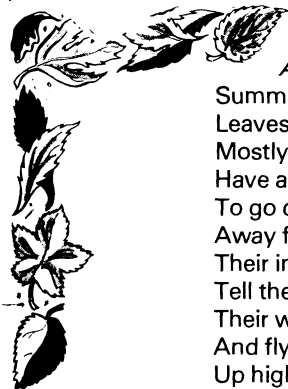
\* \* \* \* \*

Tell me Busy Beavers, how are you doing at school? Are you used to your new teacher(s)? Do you like the place where you sit? Do you have fun at recess with your friends? Busy Beaver *Arno Moeliker* has some good advice on being a good sport when you play games at recess time. He writes:

"You can be a good sport by congratulating the winner and not showing you actually wanted to win. If you win you can be a good sport by not acting stuck-up."

\* \* \* \* \*

Quite a while ago Busy Beaver *Florence Visser* sent in a poem to share with you. Here it is. Enjoy it, Busy Beavers!



#### Autumn

Summer has gone,  
Leaves are falling,  
Mostly all birds  
Have a calling  
To go down south,  
Away from cold.  
Their instincts  
Tell them to unfold  
Their wings,  
And fly  
Up high  
In the blue-white sky.

